

A
SERMON

Recommending the Study of
SCRIPTURE-PROPHECIE,

*As an Important Duty, and a great
Means of Reviving decay'd Piety
and Charity:*

Preach'd in *BELFAST*, *June 19. 1716.* Before the *PRES-*
BYTERIAN MINISTERS of the *NORTH*
of *IRELAND*, Met in their *ANNUAL AS-*
SEMBLY.

By *JOHN ABERNETHY M. A.*
Minister of the Gospel.

Publish'd at the Request of many of
the Hearers.

BELFAST,

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SEERMON

Recommending the Study of
SCRIPTURE-PROPHETIC

As an Important Part of a
Man's Education, and a
Means of increasing his
and Church's

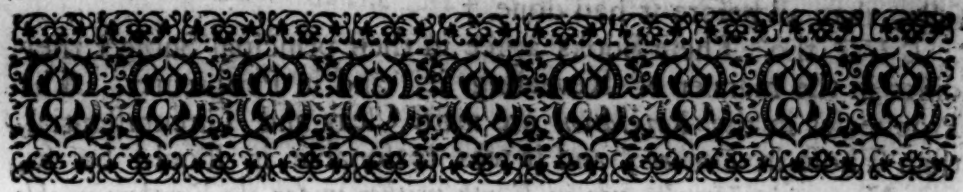
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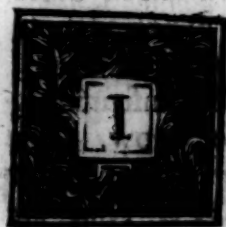
By JOHN A. B. N. M. A.
Minister of the Gospel

Published at the request of many of
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B. F. N. S. T.
Printed by J. M. M. M. M.



DAN. XII. 4. *But thou, O Daniel, shut up the Words, and Seal the Book, even to the time of the End ; Many shall run to and fro, and Knowledge shall be increased.*



Think it is agreed by the best Interpreters, that the main Subject of *Daniel's* Prophecies, and the *Revelation* of the Apostle *John*, is the same. They both of them describe the **CHURCH'S** *Sufferings* and *Triumphs* ; her *Struggles*, first with *Heathenish*, then with *Antichristian Idolatry* and *Tyranny* ; Her *Wonderful Preservation*, notwithstanding the most furious *Efforts* of *Hell*, and at length Her glorious *Deliverance*, when the *Kingdom of Christ* and of the *Saints* shall be *Erected*. Down to that happy Period are the *Predictions* continued in these *Inspired Writings*, and the most *Remarkable Changes*, in the *State of Religion* and it's *Enemies*, foretold. As the *Roman Empire* has been the principal *Seat* of the **CHRISTIAN CHURCH**, It must be the principal *Scene* of these *Transactions*. It was all along the great *Adversary* of our *SAVIOUR'S* *Kingdom*, both in the *Times of Paganism* and *Popery* ; and therefore, must be understood to have a large share in the design of the Sacred **PROPHETICK ORACLES**. It is the *fourth Kingdom* in *Daniel*, the *Beast* in the *Revelation*, with *Seven Heads* and *ten Horns*, divided into ten different *Kingdoms*, upon the fall of the *Imperial Constitution* ; and having *Subsisted* in seven distinct *Forms of Government*, the *Eighth* very like one of the *Seven* and yet *diverse* from it in

A. 2

Rev: some XVII. 11.

Dan: II. and VII. Chap. Rev. XIII

some Respects, Warred against the Saints longer and more successfully, than all before it had done. †

Rev: V: 3: *BUT* tho' These Books agree in their principal Subject, they differ in the manner of Revealing it, and in Perspicuity. The Prophecies in the *Revelation* are more Clear and Circumstantial, than Those in *Daniel*; and it was reasonable it should be so, for *No man in Heav'n, nor in Earth, neither under the Earth was able to open the Book*, which contains the deep Secrets of Providence, with regard to the future State of the Church, till the *L A M B O F G O D* purchased that Privilege, by the Merit of His Sufferings. It is indeed a Just Observation, that the *Scripture* Predictions are often wrapt up in a venerable Obscurity, to exercise our Diligence, Humility and Dependance on *G O D*, in our Enquiries; so that it's hard to understand them before their Completion, nay sometimes even after it: Yet *G O D* communicates greater Measures of Light to His People, when Infinite Wisdom ripens His Designs for Execution, or the more advanced State of the Church can bear it; especially it was to be expected those glorious Events, the *Death, Resurrection and Ascension* of Christ, should bring to the Saints the Advantage of a Clearer Instruction, in all Things which it was necessary for them to know. For this Reason when *G O D* sent his *Angel* to *Daniel* that great Favorite of Heaven, to *make him understand what was to befall his People in the Latter Days*, yet He directs him in my Text to *shut up the Words, and Seal the Book*. The proper season was not come for a full Discovery; and the Holy People in that Age must content themselves with an obscure Revelation. I know another Interpretation is put upon these Words, that because of the Iniquity of the Times, that invaluable Treasure of the Divine Promises should be secured for the Comfort of the Saints: But considering the *Sayings were dark, and the Vision for many days*; Secrecy rather than Safety seems to be intended. The Angel tells him again, *the Words are closed up and Sealed*: But at the time of the End, that is,

Dan: X 14.

Dan: XII 9.

† This last Head was not a New Form of Government, but the Revival of an Ancient One, namely, that of the *Decemviri*, therefore it is called *One of the Seven*, yet it was not intirely the same, but called the *Eighth*, being distinguish'd, especially in This, that it did not retain the Sovereignty of the *City with Seven Hills*, which the *Decemviri* had, but only the Provinces belonging to it. See *Whiston's Essay on the Revelation*. page 122.

is, in the Days of the MESSIAH's Kingdom, or rather when the Decree is ready to bring forth the great Events, *Many shall run to and fro and Knowledge shall be increased.* Then the deep Counsels of Heaven will begin to be disclosed, the dark Veil drawn aside, the Church prepared for the Amazing Scene, just before it be opened; the Spirit of God will excite his Servants to Industry in Searching out the Meaning of the Prophecies, and favor them with Success. This one Text has induced several Judicious and Pious men, to conclude, that now is *the time of the End*, because it seems so remarkably to agree to the present Age, and never to any before. If by *Knowledge* we understand Learning in general, as some do; every One is sensible what vast Advances it has made within these two Centuries. If we confine it to the Subject here immediately treated of, that is the Prophecies; it is evident, they are much better understood now, than heretofore. In former Ages the most Learned Commentators owned themselves ignorant of the Meaning of these Mysterious Visions; and the Expositions given of them were indeed very jejune and unsatisfying; as might be shown at large, if it were necessary; till by Divine Assistance, the great Mr Mede and others after him, have made Discoveries which are surprizing, but have the highest degree of probability. I think it is not possible to read the Late Explications of *Daniel* and the *Revelation* impartially, and not be convinced that the Knowledge of those Parts of Scripture is very much encreased. This is not to be attributed to the Ability or Diligence of the Moderns, above the Ancients; the true Reason is given in the Text, viz. That now, and not till now, is the *Time* appointed of GOD for making His Purposes known, because it is *the time of the End*.

BUT I have chosen this Text with another Design; than to prove from it the Approach of *the End*, that is, the great Revolutions expected in the Church and in the World by the fall of Antichrist, and the glorious Consequences of it; tho I think it is a very good Argument for that Purpose: My Intention is to recommend the diligent Study of the *Prophetick* Parts of Scripture, those especially that foretel the Changes which have happen'd, or shall happen in the State of Religion, during that Period which is commonly called *the Last days*. I Suppose it will be allowed a Just Inference, that since GOD has said *Knowledge*

shall be increased, it should be our Endeavor to encrease our Knowledge; for his Promises, so far from superseding our Industry, are the greatest Encouragement to it. Knowledge especially is a Gift, to the Attainment whereof, the utmost Vigor of our own Spirits must cooperate with the Spirit of G O D. Shall we pretend so to rest in the Word of the L O R D, as in the mean time to be wholly unactive? Shall we leave it to Him, to accomplish His Promise by Miracle or how He pleases, while for our part we will contribute Nothing to it? These are the Disingenuous Arguings of Sloth and Unbelief. Then only we show a pious Confidence in the Divine Veracity, when we make it the foundation of our Diligence, and exert our selves with Zeal for obtaining the Blessings he has promised. Particularly, let it be considered, the Text assures us our Knowledge must be the fruit of Labor; and then only it shall be encreased, when many run to and fro.

THE main Scope of this Discourse being to enforce what I have proposed, and which I take to be a very Important Duty, I will now offer some Reasons.

First, It is a Respect due to Divine Revelation: When the great G O D has vouchsafed to declare His Mind, it becomes us to enquire into it, even though a great deal of Difficulty should attend our Endeavours. Our SAVIOR required the Jews to search the *Scriptures*, that is principally the Prophecies concerning the MESSIAS, which were some of them, in respect of the time of their accomplishment as dark, as those relating to the Fall of Mystical Babylon, and the Restoration of Israel. The Secrets of God's Counsel were communicated to Daniel with great solemnity, and by a very peculiar Condescension. He must be prepared by long Fasts and many Prayers and deep Humiliation. Then an Angel is sent to him with the Message, as an Instance of Special Favour; yet the Book was sealed to Daniel, as well as it has been to the Churches since. We can scarcely imagine, that Man greatly beloved had such a Distinct Understanding, even of his own Predictions, as some far Inferiour to him now have: because the Accomplishment of many has made all clearer, and G O D provided better Things for Us, than for the most eminent Saints under the old Testament, in respect to the Knowledge of Truth as well as Grace, that the Church might by Degrees, grow up to perfection in both. But the Holy Man of G O D did not treat the Revelation given him

Heb: V. 39.

Heb: XI:

40.

him with contempt, because it was scanty; he received with Submission and acquiesced in what the Angel said to him, *go thy way, Daniel, the Words are closed up*, still thankful for the Discovery he had obtained; but withal solicitous to know the meaning as far as possibly he could. *The Vision of the four Beasts, and of the ten horns in the head of the fourth, and of the Little horn troubled him, and he came near to one of them that stood by, to ask the truth of all this.* Afterwards when he saw the Vision of the Ram and the He-goat, and in process of time a little horn which sprung up in the head of the Goat, to whom an Host was given against the Daily Sacrifice; when I say, Daniel had seen the Vision, he carefully sought for the meaning. The same pious Disposition would incline us to search diligently, what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in the Prophets did signify, when it testified before of the Churches grievous Afflictions, and the Glory that should follow; especially considering that these Inspired Teachers did minister not only to themselves, but to Us, the Things which they reported; I say, to Us particularly, because ours seem to be the Times reserv'd in Providence for a fuller Light.

Dan. VI.
15: 16

Dan. VI.
15

SECONDLY, The Knowledge of the Prophecies would tend to the strengthening of our Faith; and that, I am sure, is a Consideration which should induce us to Diligence in searching Them. I need not spend time in shewing, how much it is the Duty of Christians to *build up themselves in their most Holy Faith*; and it's certain, there cannot be a better Expedient than This. One great Argument which demonstrates the Truth of the Christian Religion is the *Scripture-Prophecies*. The Teacher who foretells such Things, as none could reveal to him but GOD, does justly demand our Assent to his Doctrines, for He must have come from God: such was the Blessed Author of our Religion, and the Extraordinary Ministers both of the *Old Testament* and the *New*. It's true there are many predictions in Scripture, besides these I am speaking of, which being exactly fulfilled, undeniably confirm the Faith once delivered to the Saints: but when GOD has given us a multitude of Witnesses, we ought to make use of them all, that by their concurring Evidence, his Truth may be Established, beyond all Contradiction. Now what a vast Collection of Holy Oracles, how many Systems of Visions, terminate in the *Time of the End*, and being given by the Spirit of Prophecy do join in the Testimony of JESUS? It is our Part to Labour assiduously, in Explaining and Applying them, that we may Convince Gain-

Jude Ver.
20

Rev XIX
10

Sayers

Sayers, the Scriptures which contain such *true sayings of G O D*, delivered many Ages before their Accomplishment, have the brightest Characters of Divine Inspiration. It is to be observed with Regret, that in this our degenerate Age, Heresies have prevail'd to a prodigious degree; nay many are arriv'd at profess'd Infidelity: But G O D whole watchful Care is ever employed about his Church, has provided us with many excellent Antidotes against this dangerous spreading Infection. Learned and Pious Men have been rais'd up, to plead the Cause of Christianity, as powerfully as ever any in the World did, except those who were Inspired. Philosophy has been brought into the service of Religion, with great advantage. The Innate Characters of Truth, which the Scripture it self bears, have been illustrated most convincingly. The Arguments, taken from *Miracles*, and the *Prophecies* long ago accomplished, have been urg'd with irrefragable force. That which will compleat the Evidence for the sacred Revelation, will be the Clear Knowledge and Improvement of those Predictions, which lately have been or are speedily to be fulfilled. These are such a New Spring of Arguments, as, when they are set in a full Light, will, in conjunction with the Rest, put Unbelievers to perpetual Shame. The Time is not indeed yet come, for this Proof to appear in all its Strength: but we ought even now, to carry it as far as we can, and we have Encouragement to Diligence, when every step of our Progress will add to the Demonstration of our Holy Religion.

FOR the Prophecies contain a series of the most memorable Events, from the Beginning of Christianity to the End of the World. If we search diligently, we shall find, that many of them are actually accomplished; and these are in the Nature of the Things Themselves, and according to the Established Order of the Divine Counsels, preparatory Steps to the fulfillment of the Rest. By Consequence, the more distinctly we understand the Completion of some Predictions, which are but a part of the intire System, the more is our Faith confirmed in the Truth of those which are yet unaccomplished, and it appears the more evidently that the whole is a Divine Revelation.

THIRDLY, Our constant Endeavour to grow in the Knowledge of the *Prophecies*, is a natural fruit of Zeal for the Glory of G O D and the Prosperity of His Church. Every sincere Christian has the Welfare of *Jerusalem* at heart, and is anxiously concern'd for her Peace and Felicity, which will produce solici-

tous

rous Enquiries about the time of her Deliverance from Oppression. We find in Scripture, the Saints long very passionately, for the end of the Church's Calamities; and their Complaints were bitter, when there was *none who knew how long*. Now it is plain, that true Religion has been for many Ages depress'd and persecuted; The Fearers of G O D have suffered Cruel Things from their prosperous Enemies; They have been made to drink the Wine of Astonishment. That Tyrannical and Idolatrous Church of Rome, called Spiritually Sodom and Egypt, that Mother of Harlots and Abominations, has made the Inhabiters of the Earth drunk with the Wine of her Fornication, and she her self has been drunken with the Blood of the Saints, and with the Blood of the Martyrs of J E S U S. She has spread the Poison of her false Doctrines and Superstitious Worship over all parts of the World, that would receive them, and Death and Desolation wherever her corruptions were refused. Sincere Piety has been almost banish'd out of the Earth, at least confin'd within very narrow Limits, or, in the prophetick Language, the Church has been in the Wilderness for Time and Times, and the Witnesses for GOD have prophesied in Sackcloth. And although G O D has been pleased, to give some Reviving to His People by the Reformation; the abominable Errors of Popery are discovered, some Nations are rescu'd from their vile Subjection to the Beast, the glorious Day of clear Gospel-light has begun to dawn, which is a Mercy never to be sufficiently prized: Yet Enemies are still lively and strong, and as far as human Wisdom can discern, the Affairs of Religion are in a very uncertain, nay dangerous situation. Even in the Protestant Churches, Heresies, Schisms and Impietys abound! Since these Things are so, surely the Zeal of G O D's house, Love to His blessed Cause should make Us earnest in enquiring, when the End shall be, and, after the Example of his Servants, cry to him with a pious Warmth, O G O D, how long shall the adversary Reproach! shall the Enemy blaspheme thy Name for ever? I take it for granted, there is such a solicitude in the Minds of the Godly. It is not possible it should be otherwise. But if we would be satisfied on a right foundation, let us see what is noted in the Scripture of Truth. G O D has given Us the sure word of Prophecy to be our infallible Guide.

Psalms
LXXIV:

9:

Psalms
LX: 3:

Rev:
XVII: 2:

Rev:
XVII: 6:

Isaiah:
LXXIV
10,

Dan: X:

F R O M These Considerations, I think it is very evident, that our neglecting to improve our selves in this necessary Branch of Knowledge, is altogether Inexcusable; and as I verily believe many of us are guilty, the Counsel which appears to be so just,

will, I hope, be acceptable to Us; and that we shall, with a dutiful Regard to the Authority and to the mercy of G O D, who has condescended to reveal his Will to Us, for our own Edification and the Conviction of others, and with a Zealous Concern for the Welfare of *Jerusalem*, apply our selves to the diligent search of these Things, which were certainly *written for our Learning*, and which *J E S U S* sent His Angel to testify unto the Churches.

I K N O W many look upon themselves under great Discouragements in this Study; nay there seem to be plausible Objections against attempting it altogether; I think my self therefore oblig'd to take notice of them, and I do not despair of giving a satisfactory Answer. It may be said, I have all along acknowledg'd, and its plain enough from Scripture, that there is a *time Limited* in the Decree of G O D for the Churches understanding the Prophecies; we do not know whether that be come yet; Many Learned Men have labour'd in this Work, with very little success, and the Time and pains they have spent in it, might have been much more usefully employed on Subjects that have greater Certainty in them: some of their Conjectures have been Notoriously disproved by the Event; Even since the Celebrated Discoveries of Mr. Mede, we are at a Loss what to fix upon; The Followers of that great Author are still refining upon his Schemes, and almost every New Essay brings New Expositions different from, and Contrary to what has been offered before. This I take to be the substance of what can be objected, and if it be not of sufficient weight, our Obligation to the Duty I am recommending, must be indispensable; for to neglect Enquiring into the Mind of G O D, especially in Matters of so great Importance, so useful to the Church and to our selves; I say, to neglect Enquiring, when we have Encouragement to hope for Success, is an Argument of a very profane Spirit. I will therefore endeavor to examine the Matter impartially, and I have several Things to Reply.

First, T H E main force of the Objection lies in the apprehended Uncertainty of the Time appointed of G O D, for the Churches understanding the Prophecies. Now let it be consider'd, there is no other way to be fully satisfy'd in this, but by examining seriously the foundations, upon which it is alledged the Time is actually come; that is, examining the Expositions that are given of the Predictions, with the Reasons which support them. If the In-

interpretations already given of the Prophecies are just, then the Time for our Understanding them is already come, and our Ignorance of it is only to be charg'd on our Sloth and Prejudices; for what other way can we propose to have Satisfaction? These, as well as other Parts of the Holy Rule of Faith, are clear by their own Light, and we must not expect a foreign Testimony. The whole Matter then, may be left to this Issue: Let any man carefully and impartially read the best Books that have been wrote on this Subject, especially within these 70. or 80. Years, and then let him judge, nay let him try, if he can doubt whether the determined time of the End, be not come or speedily approaching. But the truth is, they are most forward to object, who are altogether unacquainted with, or at least have but a very superficial Knowledge of this sort of Learning, and cover inexcusable Oseitancy with the fairest pretences they can find.

Secondly, ALTHOUGH we have not such Evidence in this, as other great Points of our Belief, we ought not, on that Account, to reject, or even doubt of it. An Ingenuous Mind will, in a search after Truth, content it self with such Proof, as the Nature of the Subject will bear. The Enemies of our Religion pretend that we have not demonstrative proof for it, and therefore it ought not to be Believed, being a matter of so great Consequence. This is the main Support of Atheism and Infidelity. But we maintain, on very good grounds, that Christianity having all the Evidence, that the Nature of the Thing can admit of, It does justly demand the Assent of every Reasonable Man, though it cannot be proved in the same Manner, as the Objects of Sense or Mathematical Propositions, which are more within the Reach of Human Capacity. And indeed it is plain, that our Belief, in the most important Concerns of Life, and our Conduct pursuant to it, is founded on Moral Assurance. In like manner, although we have not such perfect overbearing Proof, for some Matters contained in the Revelation, Such as the time of Antichrist's Fall, and the Commencement of the Millenium, as we have for the Essential Doctrines of Faith, the Deity of our SAVIOR, and the Redemption of the Elect by his Death; yet we ought to believe, Resting in such Evidence, as the Wisdom of GOD has been pleased to give Us. Yet,

IN the Third place, It may be confidently asserted, that the main Substance of the Prophecies, whereof we are now speaking,

is as clearly understood, and the Evidence for it as full, as for the Truths contained in many other parts of the *Bible*. The great Design of Them is comprehended in these Particulars; That sometime after the Establishment of Christianity, there should be a General Defection in the Church; That the Apostate Idolaters should be form'd into a Body, under one Head of the Apostacy, who is *the Antichrist*; That there is a Limited Time for His Rise, the Continuance of his Reign and his Fall; and that after it the *Jews* shall be restored, and become a Glorious part of the Christian Church, which shall then be more pure and flourishing, than ever it has yet been. These Things are as plainly revealed as can be: The Meaning of the Scriptures which contain Them is so clear, and determin'd by such certain Characters, that it is hardly possible to resist the Evidence of them. What can be plainer than these few Propositions, in which the Principal Prophecies of the *Revelation*, and the parallel Places in *Daniel* are sum'd up? The Pope of *Rome*, with his subordinate Hierarchy is *the Antichrist*; which is so fully proved by *Protestant* Divines, beyond all Rational Contradiction, I confess, I cannot be far from Monsieur *Jurieu's* Opinion, that it is become a Fundamental of Religion. The Beast ascending out of the bottomless Pit is the *Roman Empire*; The Harlot that rides the Beast, is the City of *Rome*. The Commencement of his Wicked Tyranny is positively fixed, especially by that great Historical Character, The *Ten Kings* receive their Power as Kings one hour with the Beast. The Duration of it is 42. Moneths or 1260 Days; and a Day must be taken for a Year. These are the foundations, for our right Understanding the Prophecies, in which the Modern Interpreters are all agreed; and every one sees, what Comfortable, what Glorious Hopes of the Churches Deliverance are founded upon them. It is true, there are many other Particulars in the sacred Prophetick Books, relating to the *Last Times* besides These I have mentioned, and which do not immediately depend on Them; But they are either not so necessary, or the Completion is at so great a Distance, we cannot yet attain to the full knowledge of Them. Now, what if the most Learned Commentators differ in their Opinions about such Things as are less Material, or more distant; shall we therefore reject all their Expositions? If one Author is of Opinion the *Seven Vials* are all poured out, another, on better grounds, thinks not One of them is yet accomplish'd; must we conclude the most Important Things wherein

wherein They agree are all Uncertain? Such as the time of the Rise and Fall of Antichrist. And to conclude, though there were much greater Uncertainty than there is, yet we have sufficient Encouragement to search, for the Meaning of the sacred Predictions, which is all I am at present pleading for. My Text does not say Knowledge shall be perfect; but it shall be *increased*, and he who does not believe it is *increased*, and that GOD has not, by the Lights he has communicated to his Church, in this last Age, given Us Ground to hope, the sense of the Prophecies may be found out, seems to me prejudiced enough, to resist all Arguments whatsoever.

I have reserved to the last place the principal Head of Arguments, namely, that the Knowledge of the Prophecies will be a means of reviving Religion, and have a happy Influence on the Disposition of our Minds, and on our Conversations. It is the Excellent Character of Divine Light, that it tends to Practice. It does not only make Men *wiser*, but *better too*, and while it Informs their Judgments, at the same time, it Reforms their Lives. This Consideration will, I am perswaded, have the greatest weight with serious Spirits; and therefore, I shall endeavour to show that the study I am recommending, is not an empty Speculation, but will afford Motives of the strongest Influence to Piety and Charity. In order to this, I will (*first*) give an account of what Changes are to be expected in the state of Religion and of the Church, when the Prophecies are accomplished. (*2ly.*) That these Changes do in a great measure depend on the Knowledge of the Accomplishment, at least will be very much promoted by it.

1st. I will give an Account what Changes are to be expected in the State of Religion and of the Church when the Prophecies are accomplished. No Man who reads the *Revelation* and believes it, however little he understands of the particular Predictions, but must be of opinion, It foretels a flourishing State of the Church sometime before the End of the World. *The Marriage of the Lamb*, *The Binding of Satan* so as he shall no more deceive the Nations, *The Reign of Christ upon Earth*, do at least signify glorious Days of the Gospel Purity and Power, such as have not been for many Ages. The Triumphs of the *Saints in Heaven and Earth*, on these Accounts, are described in such strong Terms, as demonstrate the Occasion must be extraordinary. Now the great expected Event which shall introduce this happy State of things, is the Fall of the Anti-

Antichristian Tyranny. And indeed if the blessed Consequences of that remarkable *Victory* obtained by the L A M B and his Followers, were not particularly mentioned, there were grounds enough to expect them. While the *Kingdom of darkness and graven Images* stands in its full strength, pure Christianity is still under Persecution, the *Woman* continues in the *Wilderness*. But when the *Whore that sits on many Waters*, shall be judged, and the *Beast who made War with the Saints* cast down from his Throne, the Church shall then be recalled from her Exile; Religion shall return to the Earth, and shine in its Native Beauty; for that is what we must understand by the Churches flourishing. Her Glory consists in real Practical Godliness, in the fruits of the Spirit, which are Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance; not in External Splendor, Riches and secular Greatness. These belong rather to Great Babylon, which sits as a Queen clothed in fine Linen and Purple and Scarlet, and decked with Gold and precious Stones and Pearls. I cannot but think it worthy of our Observation, that the *Papists* boast of the outward Visibility, Power and Grandeur of their Church, as the Characters of the true Church; and they are the only Sect of Christians who avow that Principle; whereas according to the Scripture Account, they are possessed by *Antichrist* in a greater measure than ever they were by the true Church: but such corrupt Notions shall perish with the Impostor, whose Interest it is to maintain them. Indeed it is hard for us to make a distinct Judgment of the *Millenium*, what the vast Importance is of St. John's Vision in the XIX of the Revelation: but we are sure, it denotes a Condition of the Church, for Purity and Glory far exceeding any thing ever we were acquainted with, which is the reason we have so great Difficulty to apprehend it.

BESIDES the prosperous Exaltation of CHRIST'S Kingdom in General, we may expect great Advantages will accrue to the Protestant Churches in particular, by the Destruction of Popery; what I mean by this, is a more perfect Reformation: and that will be allowed to be the greatest Advantage sincere Christians can desire in this World. To justify this Observation, which I take to be of very great Consequence, I desire the following Particulars may be considered. First, that the Reformation of the Churches, which commences from the first shock given to the Antichrist-

Gal V:
22.

Rev.
XVIII:6:

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Christian Kingdom, is carried on Gradually. This seems to be Countenanced by the Prophecies themselves. In Daniel we find four different Numbers, intimating four different Periods, in the great Progressive Work of Erecting our S A V I O R 's Kingdom, on the Ruins of its Opposite. In the VIIIth Chapter of Daniel we have these Words, *And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three hundred Days (or Evening-mornings) then shall the Sanctuary be cleansed.* In the XIIth Chapter, *The Man clothed in Linen held up his Right Hand and his Left Hand to Heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever, that it should be for Time, Times and an Half, or a Part of Time.* Again from the Time that the daily Sacrifice should be taken away, and the Abomination that causeth desolate set up, there shall be 1290 Days. Lastly, *Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the 1334 Days.* Without attempting a particular Explication of these Numbers, one may reasonably conclude, they signify that the Glorious Design is not finished at once. But every new step brings a new Accession of Glory to Religion, and raises it by farther degrees from its former Obscurity. In the Revelation, there is a Remarkable Difference between the End of the Reign, and the Life of the Beast. He was to continue in his Power 42 Moneths, yet after the fall of Babylon, which must determine the Reign of the Beast, another Angel follows saying with a loud Voice, *If any Man worship the Beast and his image, and receive his mark in his Fore-head or in his Right hand, he shall drink of the Wine of the Wrath of GOD.* Again it is plainly intimated in the XVIIIth Chapter, that the First Fall of Babylon is but partial; for after the Cry that Babylon the great is fallen; another Voice from Heaven says, *Come out of her my People.* And afterward, in the XIXth Chapter, comes the Total Fall, and the Judgment of the Beast and false Prophet.

2ly. T H E Antichristian Spirit may be working, and in a great measure prevail, where his visible Dominion does not appear, or is not acknowledged. The Apostle Paul saw the Mystery of Iniquity already, working in his Time: and the Apostle John tells us when he wrote his First Epistle, there were Antichrists in the Church; though certainly the Reign of the Beast, with seven Heads and ten Horns did not begin before the middle of the Fifth Century, and probably, that which is strictly called the Antichrist, or the second Beast, in the Thirteenth of the Revelation, not till the Beginning of the Seventh. The Monster rising out of the bottomless Pit could not at first appear in his full Proportions. The Christian Church would

not

Dan: VIII.
14.Cb: XII.
7:

Ver. 11:

Ver. 12:

Rev:
XIII: 5:
Chap:
XIV: 8:
Ver. 9, 10:Chap:
XVIII: 2:
Ver. 4:
Chap: XIX:
20:2 Thess:
II. 7:1 Jo, II:
18.

not suffer such prodigious Tyranny and Corruption at once to be obtruded on her. But Holy Divine Providence permitted the Dark Designs of Hell to be carry'd on by Leisurely Steps. At first Lesser Corruptions crept into the Worship, and Usurpations into the Government of the Church; and these gradually encreasing, especially by being rigidly Imposed, prepared the Way for *the Man of Sin* to ascend his Throne. It is not to be doubted, but many served his Interest, who were far from such a Design. We need not scruple to charge the Antient Church, with Introducing the Grand Defection, after so good Authority as I have cited of two Apostles, who tell Us they saw it beginning in the purest Age: And afterwards some even of the Bishops of *Rome* † observed, and severely Inveighed against Antichristian Pride and Domination in the Church, before that *Wicked* was fully *Revealed*. By the same Reason, we may conclude there are Remains of the Spirit of Antichrist, where his grosser Errors and Usurpations are renounced. This will appear from those Scripture-Prophecies, which contain what may be called the Moral Character of Antichristianism, whereby it is demonstrated to be the perfect Reverse of Practical Christianity. See how the Apostle describes the Subjects of the *Son of Perdition*, who *exalteth himself above all that is called G O D, or is worshipped: They received not the Love of the Truth that they might be saved. And again they believed not the Truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.* In the *First Ep. to Timothy Chapter IVth*, from the beginning, we have as lively a Description of Antichrist, as any I think in the whole Bible, and nothing can agree more exactly to the Papacy. But observe these remarkable Words, *Speaking Lies in Hypocrisie, having their Consciences seared with an hot Iron*, which is the very Essence and Spirit of the Apostacy. It is certainly of the same Times, for *they are perilous Times*, and of the same Defection that Inspired Author speaks, in the *third Chap: of his II^d Epistle*, where we have a Collection of the most abominable Iniquities which make up the Character of the Antichristian Party. Wherever then, Men are *Lovers of their own selves, Covetous, Boasters, Proud, Blasphemers, Disobedient to Parents, Unthankful, Unholy, without natural Affection, Truce-breakers, false Accusers, Incontinent, Fierce, Despisers of those that are Good, Traytors, Heady, High-minded, Lovers of Pleasures more than lovers of G O D, having a form of Godliness; but denying*

2 Thes; II

2, 3, 4;
Ver, 10

Ver, 12

1 Tim;

IV, 2

2 Tim; III.

1;

2 Tim; III.

2, 3, 4;

6;

denying the power thereof; where, I say, these Characters appear, there are the Votaries of the *Man of Sin*, in heart and Life, let their Profession be what it will. And according to this Way of Judging, as there are some of *G O D's* own *People within Babylon*, so there are many of *His Enemies*, and consequently of *Babylon's Friends* without it.

IIIly, I F we come to enquire in fact, what the State of Religion is in the Protestant Churches, it will be found, they have, some of them, great Remains of Popery. Upon the foundation already laid, I might prove this from all the Instances of Profaneness and Immorality, Impiety, Corruption and Disobedience to the Gospel, which every where abound; and I am sure no serious Christian will deny it. But I shall only mention one Thing, that is *Uncharitableness*, especially as it relates to Church-Communion, wherein the greatest part of Protestants may be Justly charged with some degree of the Spirit of Popery. I believe it may be safely asserted, the *Papish* Church is the most *Schismatical* ever was in the World. The very Essence of Schism is the want of Charity; from thence flow Impositions *causing Division*, the Confining Religion to a Party, the most severe Unchristian Censures on all of Different Persuasions. The Papists call theirs the only true Church, they will allow no salvation to any that are out of it. They pronounce the most dreadful *Anathemas* on all that separate from them; and use them with the utmost Barbarity, whenever it is in their power. They boast of Unity and Catholicism; which great *swelling words of Vanity* real'y signify no more than Bigotry, Uncharitableness and Persecution. Now, if this be the Spirit of Popery, I doubt the Protestant Churches, most of them still retain a great deal of it.

I D O not intend to throw Invidious Reflections on any Denomination of Protestants. We have reason to bless *G O D* for all the Churches which have departed from the abominable Idolatry and Superstition of *Rome*, whatever Imperfections yet cleave to them. But certainly, the Narrow Spirit that appears in many ought to be regreted, and make Us long for the times of Reformation, which shall bring them a Deliverance from it. To confine our Common Christianity within the Arbitrary Enclosure of Unscriptural, Ecclesiastical Constitutions; to reject all from our Communion in sacred Things, who cannot come up to all our Opinions, however confessedly remote from the Essentials

essentials of Religion ; to enforce a rigid Uniformity in all the
 Modes of Worship, by severe Penalties ; shows a Disposition not
 very becoming Those who have renounced Popery, on the Ac-
 count of it's intolerable Tyranny, as well as Errors. But I am
 afraid the same Spirit prevails too much, among Protestants of
 all Persuasions, even the purest of Them ; and that the Zeal of
 many is more for peculiar distinguishing Opinions, than for *Faith*
 and *Repentance* and *Charity*, the Vitals of Religion. We are all
 of Us expecting a better State of the Church ; but what is the
 Reformation we look for ? It will be found upon Examination,
 that the Hopes of the greater part center in this, that their own
 particular Church-Constitutions shall be generally received, rather
 than in the Revival of practical Godliness. Thus we contend
 for Favorite Schemes and Tenets, rather than the great Es-
 sentials of the *Faith once delivered to the Saints*, and for the honor
 of Parties, more than for the honor of our *LORD JESUS*
CHRIST. It is true, no Principle of Religion ought to be
 esteem'd little, no Institution of our *SAVIOR* to be given
 up or dispens'd with, under the specious pretence of Charity,
 Moderation and Peace : but then I am sure, our Zeal ought to
 be Uniform, and exert it self with the greatest Warmth, for the
 most Material points both of Belief and Practice. To be very
 Zealous for Doctrines and Duties of Lesser Importance, while
 we neglect, or are more indifferent about, those which are fun-
 damental, is a certain Mark of Bigotry ; and a Catholick Cause
 is disparag'd by a Party-spirit in asserting and pursuing it. It is
 scarcely to be imagin'd, ever Christians will be perfectly agreed,
 in all their Sentiments and Practices in Lesser Things ; such an
 Harmony seems to be reserved for Heaven : But the Best State
 of the Church we can expect here is, when the Excellent Direc-
 tions of the Gospel, for our *forbearing one Another*, shall be
 faithfully and Universally practis'd ; when those who differ shall
 neither *despise* nor *Judge* one Another : but waiting for a more
 perfect Revelation, *if in any Thing they be otherwise minded*, shall
whereto they have already attained, walk by the same Rule, and mind
the same Things. MODERATION shall not then be
 loaded, with the opprobrious Name of *Luke-warmness*, nor
 Men of CHARITY reviled as *false Brethren*.

Rom. XIV:

3:

Phil. III:

15, 16:

IVly, THERE is reason to believe, that when Popish Im-
 postures shall be fully discovered and abandon'd ; when the Nati-

ers now enslaved to the *Beast*, shall withdraw their Homage from him ; Protestants will be also inclin'd to renounce the Remains of the Antichristian Spirit, Errors and Superstition: Such a remarkable Revolution as the Scripture describes *that* with it's Consequences to be, must have a strong Influence on the Minds of Men, at least of the People of GOD. If Destructive Plagues be poured out on the Papal Hierarchy, and thereby the *Stumbling-block*, which now hinders the Conversion of *Jews, Mahometans* and other Infidels, be taken away ; so as these Nations shall *flow unto the Mountain of the House of the Lord* ; it is not to be doubted but the Churches already reformed, will consent to a farther Reformation. Especially let us consider, that this great work is to be accomplish'd, not by *might nor by the Power of Men* ; but by *the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts*. GOD will consume *that wicked with the Spirit of His Mouth*. See how the Glorious Scene is described in the Revelation. *An Angel flies in the midst of Heaven, having the Everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the Earth*. Immediately there follows another Angel, saying, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great City*. When the Word of God has such a free Course ; when there is such an Universal and plentiful Effusion of the Spirit, as to Convert Papists, Jews and Heathens, surely it will Reform Protestants ; and for any thing appears yet, that is the grand Period, at which we are to expect their Reformation, and Purity and Peace to be restored to the Churches.

BUT, not only will the Churches in general obtain so great advantage by the Fall of Antichrist, every particular Christian who lives at that happy time, may expect an Increase of Grace and larger Communications of the Divine Spirit. The Accomplishment of the Promises, the Glorious Execution of Justice on the Incurable Enemies of Religion, the vast Enlargement of our SAVIOR's Kingdom, and spreading Christianity over the World, are Events which must mightily affect a pious Soul, confirm it's Faith and inflame it's Love and Zeal ; and it is not to be doubted, but GOD will then favor His People with greater Measures of Knowledge, Spiritual Life and Comfort. The Condition of particular Saints, I mean in respect to Spiritual Growth, is generally proportion'd to that of the Church. When she languishes, so do They ; when She is in a flourishing prosperous State, they partake in her Prosperity and Joy. As there is a great Opposer of Christ and His Interest in the World, so

Mic: IV.
1:

Zech; IV,
6.
2 Thes; II
8.

Rev; XIV.
6.

Ver, 8.

there is an Enemy to Him in every Soul, a Law in the Members warring against the Law of the Mind. The Day of GOD's Power will triumph over both. Christians now complain of Languishing Piety, weak Faith, prevailing Temptations and great Discouragements, which should make them long for that plentiful Fall of Heavenly Dew on the Garden of GOD, which will water every Plant, and make it flourish in the Courts of the Lord; especially for that Eminent Revival of Religion, which is promised at the Conversion of the Jews; for the Apostle says, *The Rescuing of Them* (into the Church again) *shall be Life from the Dead* to the Gentile Christians.

Rom. XI.
25.

I PROPOSE D, in the next place to show, *That the happy Change in the State of Religion does, in a great Measure, depend on the knowledge of the Accomplishment of the Prophecies*; at least is very much promoted by it, and this will very easily appear. When Divine Predictions are actually fulfilled, they cannot make suitable Impressions on our Minds, nor consequently produce the Effects they ought to have in our Reformation, unless we know their Accomplishment; especially when the Prophecies themselves import a Change to the Advantage of Religion, and the Event is it's Revival; it's plain our Knowledge must very much contribute to it, for Piety grows upon the foundation of an Enlighten'd Judgment; and Religious Sentiments, and a Regular Zeal must be derived from this View, that GOD is leading us into them by the Amazing Completion of his Promises.

2. Per. III.
11.

BUT if the Prophecies are not actually fulfilled, only the Blessed time is approaching, can any advantage accrew even from the Knowledge of that? Yes certainly, for it is a strong Motive to practical Godliness. The Apostle Peter argues for *all holy Conversation and Godliness*, from the Churches Expectation of the Day of the Lord, in which the Heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the Elements shall melt with fervent Heat; the Earth also, and the Works that are therein shall be burnt up: and the force of the Motive is taken from the Hope as well as the Fear of that Glorious Day. By Parity of Reason, the believing hope of other great Revolutions (which are also in Scripture called *the day of the Lord*) in which the Justice of GOD is manifested against his Enemies, and his Mercy and Faithfulness to his People, ought to have the same Influence on us, and their Influence ought to be the greater, when we know them to be near. But especially these Words of that Inspired Author are remarkable, *looking for and hasting unto the*

(21)

the Coming of the Day of G O D, or rather it should be rendred *hastening the Coming of the Day of G O D*. Here now is the Argument. Christians may *hasten* the Coming of the Day of G O D; and how? It is by *looking for it*, that is by a steady believing Expectation: at least our *Looking* will produce those Effects whereby it is *hastened*. The Faith, Repentance and Reformation of the Church accelerate her Deliverance, and are the immediate Preparation for God's appearing on her behalf, according to His Word; whereas the Unbelief and Disobedience of his People delay the Accomplishment of his Promises. When the *Israelites* were brought out of *Egypt*, they expected immediately to be possessed of *Canaan*; but their Distrusting G O D, and their Rebellion against Him, cost them many tedious marches through the great and terrible *Wilderness*; nay, and the Carcasses of that wicked Generation fell, that they might know *GOD's breach of Promise*; (i. e.) that the Blessings He had promised were justly withheld, because of their Sins. It is true, the time for the Performance of the Divine Promises is unalterably fix'd, by a Decree; but so are the Means; and our Holy faithful Obedience is a principal One; so that if we turn to the Lord and exert our selves with a pious Zeal in his Service, we have the Honour to work together with G O D, and contribute to the performing of the Mercy promised to his Church. When his People are a righteous People, the Lord will hasten His Work in His Time. If there is ground to believe from the Scripture Predictions, that G O D is speedily Coming, to deliver His Church and Consume His Enemy, as we sin greatly by disbelieving it; so our firm Persuasion, our stedfast Looking for it will afford the strongest Arguments for Universal Holiness of Heart and Life, whereby that blessed Work will be *hastened*; whereas to continue in Security and Impenitence, is to obstruct it as much as in us lies, and to hinder the Salvation of the Church as well as our own.

BESIDES, if we consider that State of Religion which the Prophecies plainly import, and which is to be expected, whenever they are fulfilled, it must have a mighty Influence to produce such a Disposition of Mind, and such a Conversation as is suitable to it. As he who has the solid hope of a Glorious Eternity in Heaven, will in the mean time purify himself, that he may be prepared for it; so while we look for an Heaven on Earth an Age of flourishing Christianity, we shall endeavour to antedate its Exercises and Enjoyments, by the practice of Substantial Piety, the fruits of a lively Faith. If We know the Time is approaching, when Error and

Cor-

v. 12:

11.
21, 22.

1. Job. III:
3.

Corruption shall be exchanged for Truth and Purity, Superstition for Gospel Simplicity, when unchristian Divisions shall end in universal and diffusive Charity, *what manner of Persons ought we even now to be* a Impiety and worldly-mindedness, a formal Hypocritical Religion, *Levitical* indifference and a narrow uncharitable Spirit will but ill agree with such an happy State; therefore it is best to lay *them* aside, that we may be prepared for it. When our Minds are possess'd with this Apprehension, that our **L O R D** comes quickly, we will endeavour to be in a ready posture for meeting Him, and for acting the part that becomes us. Nothing can be more effectual to rouse us out of our Security, to quicken our Zeal, and enlarge our Charity, to turn our private Emulations and Party-quarrels into a Nobler Contention for the End of the Commandment, which is Charity out of a pure Heart, and of a good Conscience, and of Faith unfeigned.

1 Tim: I:
5.

Dan: XII:
10.

Lastly, **T H E** Knowledge of the Prophecies at the time of the End, is an Argument for practical Godliness, as it is a Blessing particularly promised to the Godly. This is plain from the Express words of Christ the great Angel of the Covenant, to the Prophet Daniel. *Many shall be purified and made white and try'd, but the Wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.* The understanding of the Mysteries Oracles shall indeed be granted to the Church; but not to all promiscuously; it is the peculiar privilege of the wise, that is of the Religious, who must first be purify'd and made white: But the *Wicked shall do wickedly*, and therefore *they shall not understand.* By the just judgment of **G O D**, as well as by the natural tendency of their own incorrigible Wickedness, *Their foolish Hearts are darkned*, their Minds sealed up in Blindness and obduracy. It may happen indeed in this, as in other Points of Divine Revelation, that Men of Corrupt Principles and Lives may attain a great measure of Speculative Knowledge; yet that does not hinder, but that farther affecting Discoveries, are the Rewards of Piety, and Ignorance the Punishment of Sin. Now to know the purposes of **G O D**,

Rom: I:
21.

Hab. III:
2.

concerning the Time when He will *revive his own Work*, set up His Kingdom, and build His glorious Temple on Earth, is so great a Blessing, we should think no pains too great whereby we may obtain it: surely Christians will look upon it as a sufficient Incentive to Holiness, since our **SAVIOR** himself has suspended it on that Condition, and expressly assured us, we must be *purified and made white*, that we may understand. The blame of

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our Ignorance therefore, is in a great measure to be laid on our Impurity. This I think, it evidently appears, that Piety and the Knowledge of the Scripture-Prophecies, those particularly which relate to the *time of the End*, have mutually an Influence on each other; and the increase of the *former* is both the End and the Means of encreasing the *Latter*. To be purged from our Sins, is the way to *abound* in that sacred *Delightful Knowledge*; and we shall find our Obligations to universal Holiness grow, as we grow in the understanding of the Predictions, that we may hasten their Accomplishment, and conform our selves to that happy State they foretel; so that the diligent Study of these Holy Oracles may be justly numbred among the proper Expedients for reviving decay'd Religion; and that was the Reason which principally induced me to insist upon it in this Assembly.

I **THOUGHT** in the Conclusion, to have laid before you a short Account of the Apocalyptical Synchronisms, taken out of the best Authors who have explained them, but I believe it is not necessary, for they are commonly known; besides this Discourse is already larger than I at first intended. But I must observe, that according to the Late Computations, the Time determined in the Prophecies both of *Daniel* and *St. John* for the great Events they foretel, the fall of Antichrist, and the Tyranny of the Idolatrous Kingdoms within the divided Roman Empire, the cleansing of the Sanctuary, the Conclusion of the Persecuted State of the Church and especially the two Witnesses; which will introduce the Conversion of the *Jews*, and other Infidel Nations, and the Glorious *Millenium*; the Time I say determined for all these Events, according to the Late Computations, is the present Year 1716. And indeed the exact Coincidence of so many different Predictions is very remarkable. I believe some give very little Credit to these Conjectures, as they are called, of the Interpreters. But I must own, they seem to me in the main, so probable, that nothing will ever fully convince me of their Falshood, but the Event disagreeing; and whether that be so or not, Time must discover. I am far from asserting confidently, they have hit the very Year; and I would have it observed, that the Credit of the Expositions does not depend on that; but their Reasons seem so convincing, that one may venture to say with some Assurance, the Grand Period cannot be very far off. We ought not to be peremptory in fixing a precise Time; and I think the late Expositors have generally avoided that Fault. Mr *Jurieu* is as positive

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as any I have met with, yet he says, † "If the Antichristian Empire should run to the Year 1720, none could justly treat him as a false Prophet, or accuse him of Rashness." Some others think it may continue yet 16 Years longer than the last term he pitches upon, (tho they hope not) for it is possible the Rise of the Beast is to be reckoned from the Year 476. when the very Name and Shadow of the Roman Empire ceased under *Momyllus Augustulus*. When things at so great distance are foretold in dark and figurative Expressions, it is not to be wondred at, if the meaning cannot be so perfectly found out, as to the precise Year of the completion, till Providence it self interpret by the Event. But Candid and Judicious Persons will distinguish between the Substance of an Interpretation and the Circumstances. The former may be solid when there is a great deal of uncertainty in the Latter. *Daniel's* Celebrated Prophecy of the 70 Weeks is allowed by all Christians, who understand it, to be a strong Proof that *J E S U S* is the *M E S S I A S*, yet the precise time of the Commencement and Expiration is still in Dispute, among Learned and Orthodox Divines. I hope the Substance of the Modern Interpretations may be depended on as true; if not, we must make this Melancholly Conclusion, that the Words are still shut up, and the Book sealed that the Church has never to this day, understood the Prophecies of *Daniel* and the *Revelation*.

At least, I am sure there is sufficient reason for what I have insisted on, that is, to enquire into the Prophecies diligently, since Those who have laboured most in that work, bring us such a comfortable Report, that *G O D's* Salvation is near, and his *Righteousness* to be Revealed. And to all our other Methods of Enquiring, let us add fervent Prayer. Thus *Daniel* did, when he understood by Books, of the Number of the Years, whereof the Word of the *L O R D* came to *Jeremiah* the Prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the Desolations of *Jerusalem*. Then he set his face unto the *L O R D G O D*, to seek by Prayer and supplications, with fasting and Sackcloth and Ashes. Prayer and study will be assisting to each other. The greater Discoveries a pious Soul obtains by searching the sacred Books, the more earnest will it be in Supplication: and if we pray fervently, we shall at once encrease our Knowledge and hasten the Day of the Lord. It is certain, the most serious Christians are Impatient of the present State of things, and long for a Change. While they observe the Lamentable decays of Religion, their

in. IX.
25.

Ver. 3:

their Minds are possess'd with the dismal Expectation of Calamities to come upon the Churches, as the only way that seems to them left for a Reformation. What ground there may be for such Apprehensions, we cannot positively tell. But GOD's Judgments are Unsearchable and his ways past finding out. The Prophecy of the Scripture, which in old Time, came not by the Will of Man, nor is of any private Interpretation, is a sure foundation for our hope. This while some are ignorant of, they have substituted melancholly Suggestions of their own in the Room of it : But we ought to comfort one another with the Inspired Words.

2 Per. I.
20, 21.

1 Thes. IV.
18.

ESPECIALLY Ministers ought to lay up a treasure of this sacred Knowledge that *their Lips may keep it, and the People seek at their Mouth* ; that the *Watchman*, as far as he is instructed (and certainly his Negligence in Enquiring can never be excused) may be ready to answer the Question, *what of the Night ?* or if the joyful *Morning* be approaching. Besides, the Pastors are to act a very eminent Part in all the happy Mutations which shall arrive to the Christian Church. It is agreed by all Commentators, that they are represented either by the 24 *Elders* or the *four Living Creatures*, in the Visions of the *Apocalypse* ; and we shall find they are still the first in the Divine Chorus, to sing the Hymns of Praise ; and according to the Duty of their Station, to lead the People in that important Service ; particularly at the *Sounding of the Seventh Trumpet*, that is at the fall of Antichrist. It is therefore the Business of the Pastors to *stand upon the watch-tower*, that they may discover the Approaches of their LORD, and be ready to attend the province assigned them. I conclude with these remarkable Texts of the *Revelation*, Chap. I. 3. *Blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the Words of this Prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein, for the time is at hand.* Chap : XXII. 6, 7. *And He said unto me, these Sayings are faithful and true, and the LORD GOD of the holy Prophets sent his Angel to shew unto his Servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold I come quickly : Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the Prophecy of this Book. and ver: 10. And he saith unto me, seal not the Sayings of the Prophecy of this Book : For the Time is at hand.*

Mal. II.
7.

Isa. XXX.
11, 12.

Rev. XI.
16, 17.

F I N I S.

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GOD of the holy Prophets sent his Angel to shew unto his Servants
these things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly. Blessed is
he that keeps the sayings of the Prophecy of this Book, and see to. And
he said unto me, seal not the sayings of the Prophecy of this Book: For
the Time is at hand.

